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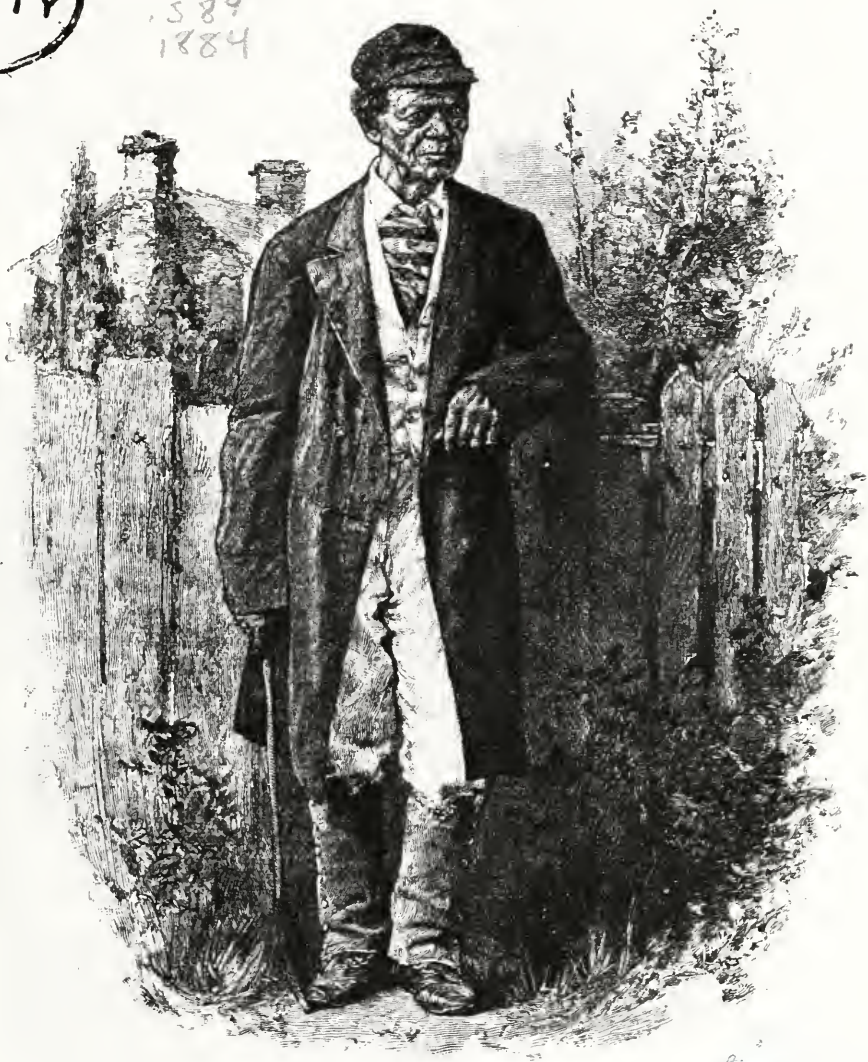
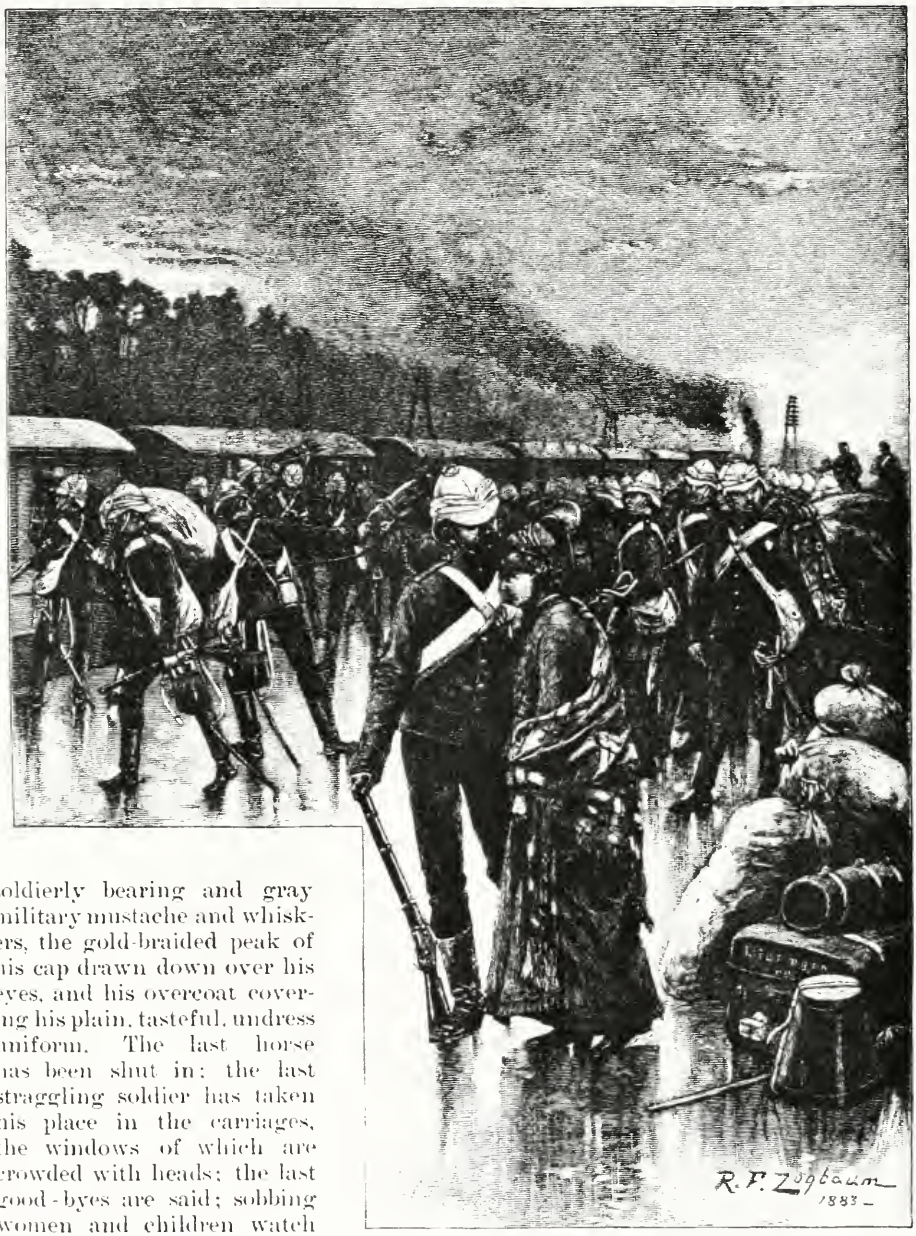


CHARLES STEWART.

MY LIFE AS A SLAVE.

THE following autobiographical narrative has been taken down almost verbatim from the lips of its hero, an old negro man, who has dictated or told the whole of it with absolutely no help but his own memory. He does not read at all, or, of course, write either, though he once knew his alphabet, and there are none of his contemporaries alive in this part of the country, all the older members of his last owner's family, with whom he still remains, being dead, and none of those among them, to whom old Charles has been a life-long servant and friend, I might almost say necessity, knowing anything about the names and dates of races and race-horses, which are given exactly as he remembers them. Nothing throughout has been altered in any way except to make the details as consecutive and



THE GIRL I LEFT BEHIND ME.

soldierly bearing and gray military mustache and whiskers, the gold-braided peak of his cap drawn down over his eyes, and his overcoat covering his plain, tasteful, undress uniform. The last horse has been shut in; the last straggling soldier has taken his place in the carriages, the windows of which are crowded with heads; the last good-byes are said; sobbing women and children watch husband and father with streaming eyes; the younger and more thoughtless of the soldiers are cracking their parting jokes. The colonel touches his helmet, and with a shake of the general's hand turns to the train. "Get on board, gentlemen!" to the officers. "All ready." The station-master raises his hand, the whistle of the locomotive shrieks, the band on the platform strikes up "Auld Lang Syne" again. Slowly the great driving-wheels of the engine begin to move. Good-by, Mary, Tom, Katie. God bless you! Good luck! And amid loud cheers the long train glides down the long line of glistening rails and disappears around a curve.

the dialect as intelligible as possible, and perhaps it may be as well to add here the facts necessary to complete his story. He does not exaggerate in any way his life in Virginia; he was the favorite and trusted servant of Colonel Johnson during his whole career with him, was in charge of first one training stable, then another, and for several years was employed with the entire care of valuable race-horses and stud-horses, which he took from place to place and course to course in Kentucky, among others, as he mentions, Monsieur Tonson and Medley. At such a distance from his master, and unable even to read his letters of instruction himself, he yet discharged his duties excellently, keeping long accounts in his head, and handling the large sums of money which were constantly passing through his hands with scrupulous accuracy and care. All these facts about him are gathered from letters, family tradition, and the direct report of his masters to the writer's mother, all of which confirm his own perfectly literal and impartial statements. When purchased by Judge Porter, of Louisiana, he was at once placed in charge of a racing establishment where there were never less than twelve horses in training, and which kept forty or forty-five men and boys constantly employed. It was a position of much care and responsibility, for there was a race-course on the plantation which was a favorite centre for turfmen, and Charles was called upon to train horses for this or that gentleman so frequently that he was compelled to establish a system, and undertake so much and no more.

After Judge Porter's death, in 1843, Charles remained in his new home in the service of his late owner's brother, who left him where he found him, as head trainer; and in that position, travelling every spring and autumn to one course or another as the horses went to fulfill their engagements, he continued until his master's death, and the consequent breaking up of the racing establishment, reduced him to the less glorious level of family coachman, and general "boss" of everything in the way of horseflesh on the place. During the war he never left his mistress, who was alone on the plantation during the whole period, for a single day, and since its close he has been the constant, never-failing factotum, adherent, and, as he calls it, "'pendence" of the whole family.

About ten days ago the writer said to him: "Uncle Charles, I want you to come in this evening and tell me all you can remember that ever happened to you, from the very beginning, and let me see if I can not write it down so that people can read it. You have told me so many things about when you were young, I want to put it all down together in black and white." The old man was deeply interested at once, and when he fully understood the object in view, his pride and delight exceeded all bounds. He went off to his own house, which is quite near, and for the rest of the day refused to speak or be spoken to, on the plea that he was "studyin'." In the evening, at what he calls early candle-light, he appeared, arrayed in his Sunday clothes, and it being a warm night in June, the feeling of self-respect must have been genuine indeed which compelled him to put on a plush waistcoat reaching nearly to his knees, heavy white velveteen trousers ending in a pair of shooting gaiters, the whole surmounted by a long black frock-coat, a spotted silk cravat of vast size, and a small jockey's cap. It was a brilliant, clear evening, and his own cabin not two hundred yards off, yet he carried a blue cotton umbrella of the very largest size. In this costume he has presented himself every evening since for the *séances* whose results are given in this sketch, although during the day he works about the place in an airy suit of guinea blue much better adapted to the weather. In spite of his eighty-four or five years, Charles is an extremely active, hard-working man, always busy at carpentering, gardening, shoe-making, or "horse-doctoring," in which branch of medicine he is a great authority. His third wife, whom he married after he came to Louisiana, is still living, and has three grown children, who are of little assistance or profit to their father. But he has a nice little homestead of five or six acres, with a cabin on it, which he has almost entirely built himself within the past two years, and he has already planted the place, of which he only two years ago became owner, with fruit trees and vines and shrubs of every description.

De fust thing dat I remembers of is de little town of Pocahontas, 'crost de river from Petersburg, en Virginia, an' ef you sarched dat whole town troo from eend to eend you couldn't ha' lit down on no big-

ger little yaller rascal dan me when I fust begin to take good notice of myself. Dat I was! A rascal, hide an' hyar, sho's you born. My father—dat is, I hear folks say dat was my daddy, an' he 'lowed so hisself; but mammy she lived with Aunt Mary Stevens, an' 'cept fur her being his full sister she neber let on no more'n dat—he lived en a good, large house, an' he was a sea-farrin man, a mighty light mulatter; he looked like one o' dese yere Mexikin somebodies. His wife an' chillen staid right dar all de time, an' I 'vided my time 'twixt dar an' Aunt Mary Stevens's, whar mammy staid when she warn't out home at ole Marster Enoch Vaughan's, what she belonged to, an' I took a spell o' stayin' out dar sometimes. Mammy's name was Sally; father his name was Charles Stewart; he was free, an' so was all his folks. I lived amongst 'em all, jes' as limber an' mischievious as any little 'coon dat eber stole corn. Colonel Enoch Vaughan's place was two miles from town, on de heights near Major Butts's, ole Gin'ral Harrison's father-in-law. I neber knowed which I liked de best: to hear de white gen'lemen out dar tellin' 'bout de rebelspishonary wars, an' all de ely*ments* dat tuk place when dey was fightin' agin the British mens, or to set en de chimbley-corner en my daddy's house an' hear him a-tellin' an' narratin' all about dem whalin' vyages he went on, whar de fishes has got calves, an' gives milk same as cows, and cuts up *dat fat!* dar ain't no hog ever wallered in de mud dat could give a drap for a bucket, *even countin'*, wid one o' dem almighty fat critters. He was mighty good to me, an' I kin ricolleck now how it was share an' share alike wid his yother chillen, an' how his sister, Aunt Mary Stevens, was allers givin' me cake an' clo's an' candy.

You see, de ole Colonel Vaughan died when I was a baby-child, an' de 'state was sort of all sproshered [mixed] up, so dey jes' left me at my daddy's, an' he tried time an' agin to buy me; but dey wouldn't sell me, nor hear about it. Well, arter I was goin' on 'bout ten or 'leven year old, my young mistis, Miss Lizzie Pace, what used to be Miss Lizzie Vaughan, dat I done fell arr to when her pa done died, she got broke en conserkerwenz of her husband losin' money—something I neber could unnerstan', kase I allers heerd he neber had none, nohow—an 'so my daddy he was gone, an' dey jes' up an' sole me en my tracks ter Colonel William R. Johnson. De Napoleon of de Turf was de name he went by from Dandy to Queen o' Sheba. Lord! he was a great man, sho enuff. Ef he didn't hab more stables an' more horses! De place where he lived was a mighty fine farm an' house named Oakland, jes' eighteen mile fum Petersburg an' twenty-two fum Richmond; but I neber staid dar—no, sir. De Colonel he jes' dashed his eyes ober me—I was monst'ous lean an' peart fur twelve year ole—an' says to some of de quality dat was a-settin' 'longside: "Here's a light weight for my New Market stables, an' Arthur Taylor's handling. Do you know a horse when you see one, boy?" "Yas, sir," I says; "I knows a horse fum a mule jes' as far as I kin see 'em bofe walk." Dey all larfs at dat, an' de nex' thing dey gives me some new clo's all fixed up, an' I was sarnt down to de great big training stables my new marster owned at New Market, an' I was set to wuk—de fust wuk I eber done sence I was foaled—to rub down Reality, own sister to Vanity, what was owned by Colonel Allen. De head manager of de stable den was a Englishman named Arthur Taylor, an' dough he only had eight horses en trainin' at dat time, dar was a big force of boys an' men at wuk on 'em, two boys to each horse, an' another white man second in charge, named Peter. Jehu! how we did wuk on dem horses! Dey was John Stanley, sired by Sir Harry, imported by Harry Haxall, Esq., an' dar was a Sir Archy gray filly dat I can remember well kase she warn't no 'count till she was four year ole, when she jumped ober creation. We had another dar belonging to Collyer Minn, named Moses, half-brother to John Stanley by Sir Harry.

How I did love dem horses! It 'peared like dey loved me too, an' when dey turned deir rainbow necks, all slick an' shinin', aroun' sarchin' fur me to come an' give 'em deir gallops, whew-e-e! how we did spin along dat old New Market course, right arter sunrise in de cool summer mornings! In dem times New Market was 'bout de head place in de Nu-nited States fur horse-racin', an' all de gen'lemen fum far an' near used to come. Nobody dat was anybody staid away, an' it was a fine sight when de spring an' autumn races come, I tell you. My marster was de picter of a fine ole gen'leman; he was a fa'r-lookin' man, with thick white hyar, an' eyes dat jes' snapped fire at you;

he was what you call a plain gen'leman, an' didn't b'lieve his coat an' pants was de makin' of him; he treated his servants like dey was de prime cut, an' dey all loved him. He was a yearthly gen'leman, an' ef dere is any good place anywhere, it 'pears to me like he ought to be in it. An' as fur horses, ef he jes' only walked by a horse to look at it, he could tell you jes' how far dat horse could run. Why, dere was a mar' named Clary Fisher, an' a nag called Bonnets of Blue, dat I raised myself, which was Reality's daughter. When dey was runnin', de ole man walked by Clary Fisher an' looked at her fore-legs, an' he seed a sign in one of her fore-legs dat she would lay down in runnin' a mile an' three-quarters; he tole Mr. Crowell to go back an' bet every dollar he had, an' Mr. Crowell went back an' bet his three plantations, an' won de wuth of 'em, jes' as Colonel Johnson tole him. Den dere was General Wynne an' Billy Wynne, Billy Badger and Sam Badger, John C. Stevens, Mr. Van Rance, an' plenty more what used to fotch deir stables down to New Market ebery spring an' autumn, jes' as reg'lar as clock-wuk, de second Tuesdays in May an' October. Dem was de grandest times dat eber lived. King of Heaven! it was a sight to see my ole marster, an' yothers like him, a-struttin' up an' down wid deir shirts all frilled an' ruffled down de front. Why, den you could build a ball-room as long as fum here to de stable, an' fill it wid folks, an' ebery one of 'em ue real stuff. But nowadays what's it like? Name o' Heaven! blue trash, red trash, green trash, speckled trash, dar's plenty of ebery qualinfication, but nary one dat washes in lye soap an' dries on de grass widout fadin'. Why, dar was Otway Hare, Parker Hare, John C. Goode, Mr. Corbin, Mr. Taylor, Colonel Peter Mason (we used to walk our horses ebery evenin' pas' his house), John Drummond an' Allen Drummond, the two brothers dat raised Sir Charles, all belonged to the New Market Jockey Club. Lord! how proud dis nigger was when dey called me "Johnson's Charles," an' I used to come a-clippin' down de track en a two-mile heat! De fust real race eber I rid was in a sweepstake, a mile an' a repeat, on John Stanley, trained by Arthur Taylor, when I was 'bout thirteen year ole, an' weighed in at seventy pounds. I was one o' dese yer fever-an'-ague little fellers what ain't got no flesh to take off nohow; an' ef I warn't de proudest nigger! One of de horses was Mr. Green's nag fum Norfolk. My king! it skeers me a'most to talk 'bout it all, it looks so fur back; it looks wicked to ricolleck all dese yere dead an' buried things. It seems kin' o' like shakin' up de speerits too hard.

It warn't long arter dis here fust race when I was sarnt down to Norf Kyallina to ride fur Mr. Peter Davis, an' dat was de fust journey eber I tuk. I went all alone, an' when I got up on de stage at Petersburg in my new suit o' store clo's, wid ten dollars in my pocket an' more to come, I was "high come up," I tell you. De stage was a high flyer, an' I was sorry enough when she stopped at Warrenton, whar I got out, right at Mars' William Faulkner's, Colonel Johnson's sister's son. A heap o' fine folks lived 'bout dar besides him in dem times—ole Major Dancy, Bob Ransom, Judge Jones, an' Heyward Johnson, an' John Johnson, besides ole Marmaduke Johnson, de daddy of 'em all, what was married three times, an' imported Diomed, the sire of Sir Archy, an' one of de finest horses—dough dey tell me he was twenty-one year old when dey fotched him fum England—dat eber knocked de wind in de face. De race I rid was on a nag called Aggy-up, agin a chestnut colt named Scott, by Timoleon. Dar was three o' dem Aggy nags. Dey was Aggy-up, Aggy-down, an' Oh-Aggy; an' dey was all three sarnt up to New Market to be trained even-tully. I staid down dar near Warrenton fur nigh on to six months, an' den I got a notion to go home, an' I done went. Den I staid pretty quiet at home, clost to marster, trainin' en de stables under Arthur Taylor, an' goin' back an' forth 'twixt de stables an' Oakland, or Petersburg, or maybe Richmond, wharsomeber me an' de Colonel mought be livin' en residence at de time. Ebery spring an' autumn I rid stakes for him, an' 'bout dese years we trained Bonnets o' Blue, Black Star, Jeannette Lafayette, Flyin' Childers, Betsey Richards, John Richards, an' Sir Henry. John Warlin an' me was de two best light weights. I kep' down to eighty pound. De day of de great race on Long Island 'twixt Eclipse an' Henry, me an' marster an' all on us was there en course. My king! what a crowd an' noise an' screechin' an' hallooin' dar was dat day! When de third heat come roun', Arthur Taylor rid Sir Henry, what John Warlin had rid de two fust, an' ole Purdy he jumped on

Eclipse, kase he 'lowed dat Sam Laird couldn't git de jump out of him dat he could. Dat same time I rid de stake fur John C. Stevens on his Young Sir Archy, an' los' it by jes' eighteen inches: but I made my three hundred dollars an' de fines' suit o' clo's you eber see. I tell you, I walked roun' like a ole gobbler wid a red flannel tail tied on to his hind-leg when we got back home agin. By de time I was twenty year ole, 'bout de time Van Buren was President, marster he calls to me one day, an' he says: "Charley, my boy, I has layed out fur you to hab a stable of your own separate 'pinting. You is ole enough, an' done seed de rights of things long enough, to be my depritty yourself, so I is goin' to send you ober to my stable one mile fum New Market, an' I specs you to take everything into your own keer, an' send home some o' dem lazy scoundrels dat is hidin' out dar, too thick to shake a stick at, an' jes' waiting fur me to go an' scrattle [scatter] 'em home."

So sho' enough I went to de stable outside o' New Market, an' dar I was de "boss" ober nine little niggers an' four big ones, 'sides two white trash dey called "helpers." Wa'al, I had a nice stable full of nags. Dar was Medley, an' Slender, an' Tariff, an' Arab, an' more too, but I disricollecks de oders now. Dat was de fust of my turnin' out, an' I tell you I felt so fine dat my own mudder wouldn't ha' knowed me fur her son. I had plenty o' money, an' nobody to say nothin' to me. I jes' had to train an' exercise my horses, an' send 'em up when dey was wanted. Wa'al, arter a couple of year pass away, I begin to think 'bout gittin' married. I says to myself dat I was lonesome en dat big harnsome cabin, dat I was well off fur eberything 'ceptin' a good nigger to cook an' wash fur me, an' as I neber had no notion o' wastin' victuals on a woman I didn't love, or pomperin' up one wid love an' victuals *bofe* what didn't belong to me, hide an' hyar, I jes' made up my mind to ax Colonel Burford to let me look ober a lot of mighty likely young gals he had on a place not very far fum whar I lived. It was a little slip of a farm, clost to Rock Spring meetin'-house, an' he had put a whole lot of South Kyallina nigger wenches dar till he could git 'em settled on his yother places. I had done looked all roun' Chesterfield County all ready to pick up de fust dat 'peared like she would suit; but de minute I drove up to de quarters on Colonel Burford's place I see de gal fur me. She was standin' on de step of de corn-crib sharpenin' a hoe, an' I seed dat she was as strong as a mule an' as sharp as pepper seeds, befo' I lit down out of de buggy. I axed her her name, an' she 'lowed dat dey called her Betsey Dandridge: so I axed fur de honor of pursentment to her daddy, ole nigger Dandridge dey called him, an' by sundown de mahter was fixed dat I was to git Colonel Burford's say-so right off, an' we would hab de weddin' when de corn was bent, for Scripter says, "As de corn is bent, so is de wife inclined," an' also, "Feed me wid food convenient fur me," an' 'bout dat time de summer apples would be ripe, an' de peaches.

So I started off to Petersburg, but while I was huntin' all round fur Colonel Burford, lo an' git up! what does I hear but Sim Jackson a-tellin' somebody dat he heerd dat Colonel Burford was goin' to sell de whole kit an' bilin' of 'em, track o' land an' all, to Major Isham Puckett, Esq. So I jes' rid ober de nex' day to whar ole nigger Dandridge an' his folks was a-waitin' fur me to come an' be 'fianced—what dey allers does up in Virginny befo' de marriage—an' de ole gen'leman he steps out, wid his ole black head a-shinin' like a Kentucky walnut, an' says to me, "Why, Colonel Stewart," says he (kase I had done tuk my marster's title), "we espected to see you here dis mornin' sooner dan dis; you is not so peryactical en yo' courtin' as we had espected." So wid dat I jes' steps up an' makes him a low bow, an' says I, "Mr. Dandridge, sir, you will allow me de privily of obsarvin' dat I intends to be 'fianced to yo' darter, Miss Betsey, when I gits ready, an' not befo'; an' let me tell you, sir, dar is a heap o' difference 'twixt axin' a lady fur to be your spouse, an' buyin' a gal dat you don't know de price of." Kase, you see, dat was what was troublin' me. I knowed Colonel Burford like a book, an' could calkilate on his sayin', "Wa'al, Stewart, you can hab Betsey a year or so fust to see ef she will suit you, an' den we kin talk 'bout de price," but Major Puckett an' me was on diff'unt sort o' tums. He was an old-school Whig. I was one of de new-school ones, an' we had to git acquainted better befo' I could tell what kind o' bargain he would make. But, hi! I needn't ha' bothered none 'bout dat. Jes' as soon as I steps up to him en Richmond, whar I

found him en front o' de Court-house, an' interjuces myself as being "Colonel Johnson's Charles," he was jes' as affable as a settin' hen. I seed two or three gen'lemen I knowed well a-standin' by, but I didn't ax nobody to speak fur me; I up an' speaks for myself, an' jes' as soon as I had sensed him wid what I was sayin', he laughs an' says, "Why, Charley, you can have her jes' as she stands fur three hundred and fifty dollars." I tell you I was pleased. Befo' a mule could kick, I jumped round to Mr. Jefferson Balls's office (he was Major Puckett's brother-in-law, an', besides dat, he was de money agent for Colonel Johnson, an' dat's how come he was my agent too). I drawed out three hundred an' fifty dollars, fur I had made a heap dat las' year, more'n I could spend in clo's an' tobacco, more spesherly, too, by reason dat de Colonel always give 'em bofe to me; so as soon as I had drawed de money out I jes' hands it back agin to Mr. Balls for Major Puckett, an' says, "Dis yere sum is for de ackisition of Miss Betsey Dandridge, an' all de chillen we can raise: is dat so, Mr. Balls, sir?" An' he arnsers "yes," an' give me de papers, to hab an' to hole her as long as she behave herself.

So jes' as soon as I could I put back to de Rock Spring farm, an' sho enough we was married at de 'pinted time, an' I tuk her home. I had de best kind of a house ajinin' my trainin' stable, an' you neber seed de like of all de grand things as was give to us. I hauled home three cart-loads o' weddin' presents. Sech furniture an' fixin's was as fine as dey *could* be. Lord! when I look back to dem days an' think 'bout all de money, an' dogs, an' chickens, an' ducks, an' geese, an' pigs I had, an' whole chists full of fine clo's, an' more chaney dan we could eat out of en a year, an' de Colonel ready to hand me out a hundred dollars ebery time I ax fur it, an' think no more 'bout 'em dan 'bout spittin' out a chaw of tobacco! I neber did treat none o' my wives arter dat wid de same respex, kase I was right dar whar all de folks knowed me, an' I had a heap more truck dan I eber could colleck arter I lef' Virginny. I don' know perzackly what year dat was, but it was somewhars 'bout eight year 'fo' I married my second wife down en Kentucky, an' I know de year *dat* happened was de same year Queen Victoriore tuk up wid Prince Albert an' married him, an' made sech a talkin' an' palaveerin' as neber was heered befo'. Wa'al, dar I was married, an' I mought jes' as well espress my disappintment fust as last. Treatment makes all de respex dat can happen responseful in de world, but a woman ought to tell some of de trufe once a day, ef it's only to limber up her tongue. It was a good while fust befo' I foun' out what make all Betsey's promises an' arnsers all de time fallin' flat and flatter, like bad dough or mean pie-crust, but when I seed how 'twas, I jes' sets to wuk to see ef I could cure her. I tried 'suasion an' finery, birch rods split fine, an' a light hickory stick 'bout as thick as my littlest finger, an' I tried makin' her kin an' my kin dat had religion pray fur her at de big camp-meetin'. But it warn't no use. She had three likely arrs, 'bout a year betwixt 'em, an' I neber had but dat one fault to find wid her; she cooked as good biskits, hoe-cake, bacon fry, hominy mush, an' coffee as any gal I seed; den, moreober, she could iron an' wash my shirts, an' keep things a-goin' right smart; but she couldn't seem to tell de trufe to save her life, an' it got to be so dat I jes' made my mind up to 'vorce her as quick as eber I could. In course an' sartinly I couldn't be out o' pocket for no sech a hussy as she was; an' den de question was wedder it was wuf while to keep de arrs an' raise 'em; but I says, "No, she must ha' come of a bad breed, an' a colt is mos' apt to take arter de dam, anyhow; I better git shet of de whole gang of 'em, an' try a new cross." Dar was a horse-dealer t'other side o' Petersburg by de name of Jones, what had de finest nag I had seen in a year fur sale at jes' de bery price I paid fur Betsey. De horse was named Brown Jim, an' he was wuf de money, I tell you; so I jes' says to Major Puckett dat he could have Betsey back at de same price I paid fur her, an' lowin' fur de war an' tar of de four year I had done kep' her, I would throw de boys into de bargain. Wa'al, I neber was sorry fur dat 'vorcement, nohow, an' dat autumn de Colonel sarnt me out to Kentucky, whar I had Monsieur Tonson and Medley, 'sides Black Elk, Glencoe, Leviathan, an' yothers.

Our head-quarters was in Paris, Kentucky, an' I staid dar a long time, an' was jes' as happy as a king. In de spring an' fall of de year I would take de horses 'bout fum place to place, en 'cordance wid marster's orders, an' I was jes' as free an' independent as any gen'leman en de land.

I had my helpers an' jockeys, grooms an' stablemen, under me, nobody was ober me, an' de squire or de jedge was always somewhar 'bout to read marster's letters to me. I neber had no book-larnin' myself, kase I neber was willin', fur I knowed my brain was too smart for to stand it. When anybody has got as much sense en de head as I had, dey must take great keer not to be foolin' round tryin' to stuff more en, or de fust thing dey'll bust it open. I lef' all dat fur folks dat wanted fillin' up an' patchin' on to. Yes, I was mighty happy at Paris an' at Bowling Green, whar I staid jes' about de same, 'vidin' my time 'cordin' to de horses. Dar was a heap o' rich gen'lemen all through dat country. Dar was Squire Oglen, whar Monsieur Tonson stood some time, an' was showed in the State Fair, wid me standin' alongside, an' we tuk de prizes of three fifty-dollar tankards. Ole Henry Clay was always aroun', an' mighty peart an' perlite de ole man was, too, an' knowed a horse when he seed him, I tell you. His son, Henry Clay junior, dey called him, he thought dat much of me he offered Colonel Johnson $3500 fur me himself, but de Colonel he tole him money couldn't buy me; an' he made jes' de bery same arnser to Wade Hampton, what offered him de bery same price. I had a heap of people after me, I tell you, an' some on 'em used to beg me jes' to say so as I wanted to go wid 'em an' leave my ole marster; but I would neber 'gree to dat ar scheme wid any of 'em; I was too well off fur dat, an' I heerd folks say as how "betwixt a two-edged sword you falls to de groun'," an' all sech sayin's as has sense en 'em. Whilst I was a-livin' at Paris I foun' anoder good reason fur stayin' jes' how I was an' whar I was. I 'come acquainted wid de likeliest-lookin' an' fa'rest-behavin' light-colored mulatter gal I eber seed in my life. Lord! I tell you dar ain't no sech niggers now as she was! An' dat genteel an' handy, an' sech snappin' black eyes an' coal-black hyar, like an Injun's, an' a pretty slim shape, wid sich a smooth light yaller skin, 'mos' de color of a ripe pumpkin seed. You may sarch dis world ober, but as sho as de Lord is de secret Jedge you won't eber find any 'oman as pretty an' as good as my little Kentucky sweetheart. Her name was Mary Jane Mallory, an' her owner, Mr. Robertson, tole me to marry her an' welcome, an' he would neber say nothin' to part us. She had a brother dat hired himself out as a locksmith, an' all her folks was nice, pursentable pussons nobody could be shamed by. So I married her, an' tuk her to a little house I had fixed up near de stables, an' she clear-starched an' sewed an' 'broidered an' wukked wid de hand-loom, an' made more pretty things dan I could count. She paid her marster, en course, reg'lar, so much a month fur her hire, but, lor', she neber touched her airnin's fur dat. I had plenty of money to hire as many wives as I wanted, but dis one was de onliest one I eber did want, an' so it was easy enough.

I kin see dat little house now, wid de big white bed, all clean an' sweet an' hung wid ruffled curtains, in one corner, de cupboard full of flowered chaney an' shinin' metal an' glass opposite, an' de bright wood fire, piled up wid hickory an' ash logs, blazin' on de h'arth, an' Mary Jane settin' in front by de candle wid her fine white sewin' an' her pink caliker dress an' slick black hyar, lookin' so kind o' quiet till I speaks to her, an' den you kin see de fire-light a-glimpsin' on her white teeth. Arter a while she had a arr, sech a fine boy it was a picter to see him, an' as smart an' cunnin' as a little 'coon, an' jes' as like his daddy, what was me, you know, as a ole rabbit is like a young one. Dis was little Johnny; we named him arter her folks, her daddy an' her brother; an' I kept on a-reckonin' an' thinkin' that arter a while when marster sarnt for me to take Monsieur Tonson an' Medley back home to Virginny I would fetch Mary Jane and Johnny along wid me, an' show 'em to my folks in Petersburg, kase my mammy she was livin' dar, an' so was my brothers an' sisters an' a heap of kin, an' I wanted 'em all to see my wife an' boy. But it was 'bout six months arter Johnny was born, an' I was jest beginnin' to think 'bout buyin' Mary Jane in good arnest, so as to be all ready fur de time to start, when I begin to notice dat she hab got a mighty bad-soundin' cough, an' den her mammy says, "Why don't you eat, darter? you don't eat enough." An' den yother folks say, "What make Mary Jane look so poorly an' git so lean?" I was badly skeered, an' I sarnt for de doctor, an' he says she mus' eat a heap an' drink port-wine, an' 'muse herself; so I takes her to see a ole friend at de springs, an' I buys good victuals, an' de gen'lemen, sich as Squire Oglen an' all of 'em, sends her port-wine, an' de doctor gives her quinine an'

bark an' everything, but none of it was any use; her time was come, her hour for her to go had done been struck in heaven, an' de time was short. It warn't two year arter our weddin' when I laid her in her coffin, wid her big eyes shet foreber, an' I neber grieved so ober anybody in all de world. She was jes' as fond o' me as I was of her, an' it did 'pear hard luck to lose her jes' as I was makin' up my mind to buy her out an' out, only en course it was a fortunate thing I hadn't bought her, as long as she had to die, kase den I would ha' lost her an' de money too. Arter she was in de ground it jes' 'peared to me like eberything was different; I tuk a dislikement to Paris, an' I didn't feel like goin' home to Virginny. It got so arter a while dat I got de squire to write home to marster an' tell him I wanted to go to some strange place, an' marster he writ back dat "ef I could find *a owner to suit me, dat would pay his price fur me*, I could go, dough he had neber expected to part wid me *by sale*." It jes' happened 'bout dat time dat Jedge Porter fum 'way down en Louisiana was in de Nu-ninted States, an' trabelling aroun' fur pleasure. He was one of de Washington Sennyters, an' was a great jedge (dey *said* he was a great jedge of de South, an' could make laws like a book, an' I *knows* he was a great jedge of a horse), so when he come to Bowling Green him an' me got acquainted, an' he says to me dat he was lookin' arter a head trainer fur his stables in de South, an' would I like to go wid him ef he would buy me. So I tuk a week or two to consider de mahter, an' him an' me had a heap o' talk, an' de more I thinks to myself 'bout stayin' in Kentucky widout Mary Jane, de more I says to myself dat I can't on no 'count do it.

De eend of de mahter was I tuk sech a likin' to de Jedge dat we fixed it up disaway: I was to go an' stay six months to see how I liked it, an' den, ef I didn't like it, he promised to send me back home, an' ef I did like it, he would pay Colonel Johnson $3500 fur me. Dat's what I sole for when I was young, an' I bet dar ain't many folks wuf dat 'mount o' money Norf or South. Arter dis bargain was made, I went out to Mr. Robertson's, whar my little Johnny was wid his grandmammy; an' Miss Mary Robertson she had jes' tuk sech a likin' to de little feller dat she had him roun' de house harf de time; an' now when I went up to de house wid Mother-in-law Mallory, what was totin' him in her arms, he reached out his two little fisses to her as quick as he seed her a-settin' on de piazzy. I tole her an' Mr. Robertson all 'bout my new prospex, an' when I was done, de ole gen'leman stretched ober an' picked Johnny up, an' stood him on de little stool by him, and says, "Well, Stewart, I see what you want is dis little man, an' you shall hab him for $150, an' not one penny more." I tell you I *was* pleased, sho enough, an' I paid de money, an' got de receipt, an' we toted Johnny in to Bowling Green dat bery day. You see, de reason why I neber bought him befo' was dat I had to leave him wid his grandmammy. An' some folks is so cur'ous dat I wa'n't sho dey would let a free nigger, or rader a nigger dat belonged to his own daddy, stay on de place; so Mary Jane's sister she offered to keep him fur me till I could send fur him, kase en course I couldn't trabel wid a baby like dat; but I 'lowed to send fur him jes' as soon as I could git settled. An' de eend of de mahter was I lef' him; an' I ain't neber seed dat chile sence. Wa'al, my new marster an' me we started off for Louisiana, an' I 'clar' to Moses I thought we warn't neber goin' to git dar. We was goin' an' goin', en steamboats an' stages, stages an' steamboats, fur weeks an' days, till we come to New Orleans. It warn't as big as New York, but dar was a sight of oranges an' banarnas, an' more oder kinds of fruit dan I could call de names of. But de wust of de place was ef you axed anybody a question dey arnsered you in French, an' you might screech till you was deef befo' dey would let on dat dey knowed what you was talkin' 'bout. I stood dat kind o' nonsense fust-rate fum white folks: ef dey couldn't talk no Christian langwidge, I jes' felt sorry fur 'em: but when it come to a great big fool nigger a-doin' me dat way, I jes' hits him a lick in his ole black jaws dat shet 'em up for dat day. So marster an' me we soon left New Orleans, an' come on ober here to de Takapas country, whar he got sech a big fine plantation, so much of it, so many trees, an' de fields is so broad, an' de lakes is so big, I felt kind o' skeered an' lonesome de fust week. But it didn't take me long to git ober dat feelin' when I seed de race-course, de stables, an' de horses what was waitin' fur me on de Teche.

It was de prettiest picter of a place,

an' as fine a lot of horses as eber I seed togedder, twelve of 'em always en trainin', wid more brood marrs, outsiders, an' colts dan you could dream 'bout en one night. I had a mighty good large house at de top of de stable yard, an' my bell rung en de oberseer's house, de head helper's, an' de stable; besides, I had a boy to sleep en ebery stall. I was jes' put right at de head of eberything; nobody could say nothin' to me at all. Ef I said I wanted *dis*, I got it, or must hab *dat*, I got it too. He was jes' as open-handed an' gin'rous, but he wouldn't stand no foolin' neither, I tell you. Things had to be jes' so, but dar warn't no naggin' nor scoldin'; it was jes' stiddy management.

Arter my marster, Jedge Porter, died, I belonged to his brother, Mr. James Porter, what done arred [heired] de place an' de niggers, an' ef dar eber was a good man walked en shoe-leather, he was one. Dey tells me dat

> "'Twixt de saddle an' de ground
> De sinner hab salvation found;"

an' en course we all knows 'bout dat dar horse-thief what our Saviour done pardon arter he was hung up; but I neber had no 'pinion of dis yere way of jumpin' into heaven ober de fence, 'stid of goin' right 'long by de road an' through de toll-gate, whar St. Peter takes de pennies; but dar was none o' dat wild kind of religion 'bout Mars' Jeames. He was good all through, both outsides an' down de middle, an' him an' me, an', arter he died, his folks an' me, we jes' went on peaceful an' happy till de war come an' rooted ebery blessed thing up by de roots.

A PROVIDENCE THWARTED.

IT was after ten o'clock, and there was work to do at home that ought to be finished before dinner, as old Mr. Willets knew, "but his grist wa'n't ready, and he couldn't start before it was, and it was kinder pleasant, too, settin' there—fellers passin' putty often, and men gittin' their loads weighed on the scales, or their oxen, and it was warm out there on the south side of the mill," as he explained to his wife when she came to the door, on his return home, to see why he staid so long.

Harlan's grist-mill did more business than any for twenty miles around, and there were always men hanging about the door meditatively chewing kernels of wheat, or sitting on the bench that ran along the side of the mill. It was quite a social luxury for the farmers of the region to visit it.

It was a delightful September morning—a golden haze hung over plain and hill. The air was like wine, and so clear that the cock-crowing from both neighboring and distant farm-yards rang sharply on the ear, and the blue jays' cries and the chirr of the chipmunks were to be heard in every direction. The dropping of the yellow leaves of the chestnuts and elms that overhung the mill-pond kept up a soft pattering murmur that made it pleasant for the farmer to listen with his eyes shut, and his hat canted over them to keep out the hot sunshine.

Hearing the rattle of wheels, Mr. Willets straightened himself up, and looking down the road, saw a man driving a poor old black horse, harnessed to a shackling buggy.

Mr. Willets gazed intently after him as he passed, and rose to his feet to see the last of him. As the buggy disappeared he settled down again, and looking around him as if in search of some one to whom he could free his mind, ejaculated, in a dazed manner, "I swow!" and remained lost in thought until roused by the appearance of a farmer with corn to grind, of whom he excitedly inquired, "Say, did you meet a man just now comin' from the Holler?"

"Don' know but I may hev. Afoot or drivin'?" asked the farmer, as he prepared to get his bags of corn from out the end of his wagon.

"Drivin' a black hoss—a reg'lar crowbate?"

"B'lieve I did"—slowly getting one of the bags on his shoulder and carrying it into the mill. Stopping in the doorway on his way back for another, he took off his hat, and taking out a red handkerchief, he wiped his head, which was thinly thatched with sandy locks, and said, "Come to think of it, I guess it was William Lane, wasn't it?"

"Why, yes," rejoined Mr. Willets. "I know it was; but what's he doin' here?"

"Why, he hez come and bought back